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NEWS-LETTER

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE STATE
BY
A. R. VIDLER

SUPPLEMENT

THE CHRISTIAN AND HISTORY
II.—The Christian and the Biblical Interpretation of History
BY
H. BUTTERFIELD

HERE WAS an interesting debate uring the last meeting of the hurch Assembly about the re- tions of Church and State in ngland. A motion, which in fect favoured the disestablish- ent of the Church of England, as lost by a large majority, and e following amendment, pro- osed by Lord Selborne, was rried almost unanimously: That the Assembly while luing the Establishment of e Church of England as an pression of the nation's re- gnition of religion, never- eless is of opinion that the esent form of it impedes the fulfilment of the responsi- lities of the Church as a spiritual society, and therefore structs the standing committee to appoint a small com- ission to draw up resolutions on changes desirable in the lationship between Church and State and to present them the Assembly for consideration at an early date."

Not the least curious of the many curious characteristics the Church of England is its present relationship with the ate, which is commonly described as "establishment". his term covers an intricate web of connexions which n back into the origins of English history. The present rm of the relationship still reflects the old idea that church d commonwealth are one society and that all English izens ought to be members of the National Church. Since

the Reformation this idea has never been completely realized, and by the nineteenth century the pretence that it corresponded with the facts could no longer be kept up. Catholic Emancipation and the abolition of religious tests for Members of Parliament and in other national institutions were a confession that the National Church was no longer co-terminous with the nation, but was only one (albeit the largest) among a number of churches or denominations. In spite of this, the outward forms and privileges of "establishment" have continued until now without any substantial modification.

A FREE CHURCH IN A FREE STATE?

What at first sight is most curious is that the Church of England is much less likely to be disestablished now than it was about seventy years ago, in spite of the fact that its power and prestige have greatly diminished in the meanwhile. Bishop Selwyn of Lichfield, who died in 1878, is credited with the observation that he would not give seven years for his seat in the House of Lords. About 1880, in fact, the early disestablishment of the Church of England was widely expected—both by those who welcomed and by those who deplored the prospect. The prospect was not realized because of the break-up of the Liberal Party over the Irish Home Rule question. The Liberals are the only party that has stood for disestablishment as a matter of principle, and since 1914 they have not been in a position to initiate legislation.

The Labour Party regards the relation of the Church of England to the State as harmless. While the Conservative Party would hardly contend now for the establishment in England with the same fervour as it fought the Irish and Welsh Disestablishment Bills, it nevertheless retains its traditional attachment to the idea of an established church, even if this attachment has become a good deal relaxed and the reasons for it have been forgotten.

But is a move towards disestablishment likely to come from the ecclesiastical side? The Free Churches are no

onger inclined to bring pressure to bear in that direction. Their change of attitude is in part a consequence of the happier relations that now exist between the Anglican and Free Churches. But it is still more due to the fact that the nineteenth century conceptions of a complete separation between Church and State, and of churches as merely voluntary societies within a neutral State, do not seem so attractive as they did then, nor do they match the rediscovered teaching of the Bible about the Church as a social organism and about the office of the civil magistrate as a minister of God.

The old Liberal doctrine of "a Free Church in a Free State" has ceased to fit the facts, and it is probably because the Free Churches in England have recognized that this is so that they have ceased to press for disestablishment as a matter of principle.

Similarly the movement in favour of disestablishment which seemed to be gathering force in the Church of England itself up to a generation ago has lately been receding, although since the rejection of the Revised Prayer Book in 1927–8 it has been very difficult for Anglicans to regard the present form of establishment as satisfactory.

The step that has now been taken by the Church Assembly, which had the support of both the Archbishops, signifies that the Church of England, or rather that the Church Assembly, is restive about this and is likely to press for certain modifications in its relations with the State. Among the bishops the Archbishop of York seems to be most zealous to force the issue to a head, and if the Church Assembly follows his lead it will before long ask for such modifications as would enable the Church to revise its forms of worship and its canon law, to set up a system of church courts, and to have a more direct say in the appointment of bishops. Whether the State will be willing to make these concessions, without raising the question of disestablishment and disendowment, remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, *pace* the motion of the Church Assembly, it is doubtful whether the Church of England is really impeded in the fulfilment of its responsibilities as a spiritual society

by the present form of its relationship to the State as much as may appear to be the case on paper. The attempt to secure legal modifications of this relationship may only divert attention from more serious impediments and weaknesses.

PRAYER BOOK REVISION

Take, for example, the revision of the Church's forms of worship. If the Church in 1927–8 had been able to produce a revised Book of Common Prayer behind which there were general agreement and eager conviction, there is no reason to suppose that Parliament would have impeded its adoption and use. The trouble is that the Church of England is neither generally agreed nor eagerly convinced about what forms of worship it wants. A round-table conference, summoned by Archbishop Lang, which came to an end with the outbreak of the war in 1939, revealed that, more than a decade after the 1927–8 episode, agreement on the two controverted matters of a revised communion service and the reservation of the Sacrament was still unattainable, and there is nothing to show that agreement exists yet.

This inability of the Church to agree about what it wants may not be such a disadvantage as appears at first sight. Little would be gained at present by a disciplining of the reputed " liturgical chaos " in the Church of England. Both the extent and the importance of this are often exaggerated, and in itself it would not be a bad thing, if it bespoke a wide variety of outward-looking experimentation. That might be a sign of vitality. The fact is, however, that the Church of England has so far been no more successful than other churches in discovering ways of public worship that bite into the consciousness of contemporary man. We are not of course asking for liturgies that have been accommodated to " the modern mind ". The need is for forms of worship that bring the everlasting Gospel to bear in judgment and mercy upon the thinking, feeling and acting of an industrial society, and little attempt has yet been made to meet this need. The impediment here is not so much that traditional liturgical language is not understood by the people as that

he accepted Christian images, paradigms and archetypes are no longer alive and powerful in men's imaginations. Any church that overcomes this impediment will have done something that will put it on the map of social history again whatever its formal relations with the State and whatever its lack of liturgical discipline. It is possible that a revision of the Prayer Book, if it were feasible now, would foster the illusion that this fundamental impediment had been overcome, when it has scarcely been perceived.

APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS

The nomination of bishops by the King on the recommendation of the Prime Minister raises other questions. But it is not clear that the work of the Church of England would be eased or benefited by a modification of the present arrangement, though Prime Ministers might be glad to be relieved of what must be an exacting duty. People who are, or affect to be, shocked by this feature of the establishment, are usually ignorant of the long and on the whole beneficent tradition that lies behind the nomination of bishops by the civil magistrate, which has been by no means peculiar to England. While like all other arrangements it can be, and has been, abused, a case can be made out for the view that this is a point at which the State can assist the Church better than the Church can assist itself. The Holy Ghost can guide the advisers and the decisions of the King and the Prime Minister as well as the proceedings of any body of ecclesiastical electors. Indeed the latter are more easily exposed to the machinations of parties and factions and to the artifices of intrigue. Ecclesiastical purists and enthusiasts are often blind to the ways in which original sin operates in their proceedings, and are reluctant to acknowledge that there may be tasks which the civil magistrate, who is also a minister of God, is in a better position to perform for the Church. If this is so, it will explain why, as is usually allowed, the English method, despite its anomalies, works better than electoral methods that are followed elsewhere.

If it be said that a Prime Minister might abuse his office by making purely political appointments without regard to the

interests of the Church, it can be replied that in modern times, with rare exceptions, Prime Ministers, whatever their political or ecclesiastical allegiance, have served the Church in a singularly disinterested manner. In any case, the Church always has in its own hands a certain check, which could easily, and would certainly, be brought into operation if the need arose. While Prime Ministers can nominate bishops, they cannot consecrate them. The consecration of bishops is entirely within the Church's own province. In an emergency, the ecclesiastical authorities would not hesitate to use this check, to whatever ancient legal penalties they thereby exposed themselves.

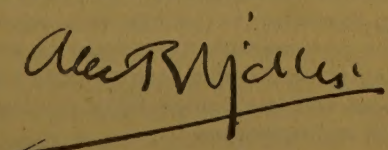
The general tendency of the modifications that are being canvassed might be to turn the Church of England more in upon itself, encouraging it to reorganize itself as just one among several denominations or sects and to forget its national responsibilities. If improvements in the relationship between Church and State can be introduced without making such results likely, they will be welcome, but all who are considering the matter ought to take these risks into account.

The present form of establishment has admittedly the nature of a makeshift. The time will come, sooner or later, for a new religious settlement in England. That time will obviously have come if or when a union of churches is brought about. It would also have come if the State should attempt to exercise an unwarranted power over the Church. Meanwhile Erastianism is not the temptation of Anglicans any more than of Free Churchmen; the temptation of all churches is to retreat from their responsibility to God for the common life of man in society and to turn themselves into efficient little ecclesiastical machines. The maintenance of the Anglican establishment, with all its confessed curiosities, may be a reminder to churches that they have a higher calling than that. The Church Assembly need be less troubled about the present form of the Church's relationship with the State than about its lack of relation with large and growing areas of the national life. The Archbishop of York has stated that " most Churchmen feel that some change in

ne relations between Church and State is urgently re-
uired ". We doubt if this is so, but if it is they should be
old that a weak Church does not become a strong Church by
anipulating, still less by tinkering with, ecclesiastical or
olitical machinery, but by reaching out into places where
ere are deaf ears and blind eyes waiting to be opened.

HE SUPPLEMENT

We publish this week the second of Professor Butter-
eld's Supplements on *The Christian and History*. He writes
a covering letter, " I have tried to avoid Biblical scholar-
ip, to which I make no pretence, writing about the things
hich interest me as a historian, and putting out rather my
ersonal experience as a Christian reader of the Bible. You
ay want to alter the title to ' Old Testament ' interpreta-
on, instead of ' Biblical '. I could not deal with the whole
Christian ' interpretation adequately without entering on
very high theology, which I must not do. I speak as a
y historian, anxious about people's views concerning
rdinary mundane history." We believe that this is exactly
hat our readers will value in Professor Butterfield's Supple-
ent. There have been many eminent Biblical scholars
ho, having steeped themselves in the language and thought
f the Bible, have then looked further afield to the longer
weep and larger scene of world history. The lay historian
as on the whole left this work of interpretation to the
iblical scholar, and Professor Butterfield's approach shows
hat added insights are gained when the process is reversed,
nd a start is made from the other end.



P.S. The University of Aberdeen recently conferred the
egree of Doctor of Divinity on Mrs. Bliss. The readers
f the C.N-L. have the best of reasons for knowing how
ell deserved this honour is.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

By H. BUTTERFIELD

It is to be doubted whether men really decide their religion by meditations on astronomy or geology or the structure of matter, even when they imagine that they are being so "scientific" in their approach to the problem of their destiny. The conclusions that they draw even from the discoveries of the natural scientists depend upon a more fundamental factor of which they may be hardly conscious—namely the posture they themselves have initially adopted towards the universe. In a similar way our interpretation of the whole drama of human life on the earth is, paradoxically enough, hardly to be decided by merely envisaging history itself and gazing upon the course of the centuries. The crucial decisions are the ones that we take when we adopt our attitude to life itself, and they belong to the most intimate regions of our personal and private experience. Those who believe that it is God whom they have known in the solitude and the profound silences will also know Him in history, but the converse process —seeing God first of all in the ordinary course of secular history— is not an easy thing to imagine taking place. And if both these processes are combined in the New Testament, so that we can say that God is revealed to men through Christ in history, we must remember that He is not revealed to the mere external observer who puts on the thinking-cap of the ordinary historical student. He is revealed only to those who take the Gospel home to themselves in that innermost region of the personality where the most intimate of our decisions are made. Indeed, history of any sort has hardly been properly assimilated by us until it has been knit into a single fabric continuous with our own internal life and experience.

We are all familiar with the practice of taking the various kinds of moral precept or spiritual truth contained in the Bible and transposing them out of their original context so that we may appropriate them to our own daily lives and labours or vicissitudes. If such a transposition were not regarded as admissible

ne Bible itself would hardly be a relevant book for the people f the twentieth century. On the same principles, and in accor- ance with the rules that govern the use of the Bible in our private xperience or our devotional life, we are bound to take over a iblical interpretation of history—indeed those who rejected such thing could hardly escape being in the position of rejecting the ible itself. Not only are our private affairs and intimate experi- nces part of the web of universal history, but such an injunction s " Fret not thyself because of evil-doers ", however we may nterpret it, must apply to public and national events as well as o the private vicissitudes of men. And as the Old Testament is o often concerned with the Jewish people as a body, rather than vith individuals as such, it is not easy to see how readers could nd it valuable in their religious experience if they did not dis- over in it an interpretation of human history—one which, if ot fully the Christian interpretation, is at any rate valid so far s it goes. If some people object that this can hardly be the case nce the events narrated in the Gospels changed the character nd altered the texture of world-history for all the future, it must e answered that whatever truth this thesis may possess on a nal analysis it does not destroy the validity of Old Testament eaching at its own level, that is to say, at the particular points vhere that teaching happens to attack the problems of history.

HE CHARACTER OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

It is possible that the power of much of the Old Testament eaching about history would be more vividly appreciated, and s relevance to the twentieth century more readily recognized, only we could rid ourselves of an obsession and genuinely onvince ourselves that the history of the ancient Hebrews was ndamentally of the same texture as our own. There is ample vidence that in their own great days, in the age of the mighty rophets for example, they looked back upon their own distant ast in the way in which we ourselves now look back to *them*; nd in manifold ways they express the thought of Psalm 44, " We ave heard with our ears, O God, and our fathers have told us, vhat work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." It would ppear to have been one of the functions of the great prophets o point out that God was still acting and intervening in history s in the time of Moses—that history in their more modern

age and the history of the days of their forefathers was all of one piece. And there is ample evidence of the repeated failure of the prophets to achieve the task—ample evidence of the desire that God should show Himself more plainly, as in the ancient days, so that people should not be able to ignore His part in history any more.

What was unique about the ancient Hebrews was their historiography rather than their history—the fact that their finer spirits saw the hand of God in events, ultimately realizing that if they were the Chosen People they were chosen for the purpose of transmitting that discovery to all the other nations. Their historiography was unique also in that it ascribed the successes of Israel not to virtue but to the favour of God; and instead of narrating the glories or demonstrating the righteousness of the nation, it denounced the infidelity of the people, denounced it not as an occasional thing but as the constant feature of the nation's history, even proclaiming at times that the sins of Israel were worse, and their hearts more hardened against the light, than those of the other nations around them. The great religious thought which stands as the Old Testament interpretation of the whole human drama was clearly the work of a few select souls—of great prophets often standing with their backs to the wall, for example—in a nation whose history otherwise ran under very much the same rules as the history of other peoples. It is even possibly true to say also that the makers of the Old Testament, while having an extraordinary feeling for the might and grandeur of the human drama, were not historically-minded in the sense that this term has come to have in the twentieth century—not interested in seeing that the past should be accurately recorded for its own sake, or that all the great episodes in the history of their country should be put into narrative for the sake of posterity.

It is remarkable that so small a nation should have come to occupy so great a place in the history of the world; and George Adam Smith, in his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, has given us cogent reasons for not accepting any mere geographical determinism as the explanation of their peculiar historical destiny—cogent reasons for regarding the story as an example of the triumph of the human soul over physical conditions. It was a

ormy history that the country had, moreover, with only a markably short period of political independence, and it has en questioned whether any area of the earth felt the tramp of oops more often than Palestine did in the period down to the pening of the Christian era. The great original contributions the ancient Hebrews to both religious and historical thought e curiously connected with the period when this stormy history me to its climax, and the country was engulfed in the conflicts etween the vast empires in their neighbourhood. Once again is necessary to remember that their fate in this respect was not nique—they experienced that cataclysmic history which we find nstantly recurring as the centuries succeed one another in this recarious universe. It is we who have long been spoiled by a eling of security and a dream of ordered progress, so that we ave forgotten the very nature of history. It is only now, in the iddle of the twentieth century, that we are beginning to know nce again what this cataclysmic history feels like—know some- ing also of the moral paradoxes with which it confronts us, nd which so often confound those who are groping for some meaning " in the human drama. The teachers of Israel, realiz- g the relationship between Jehovah and the nation's history, nd conceiving that relationship in ethical terms, set out to ndicate the moral character of history at the critical point where e difficulties are at their maximum—the point where men (as e have seen even in twentieth-century Europe) so often feel emselves victims of blind chance or sink into fatalism.

So it might be claimed that for all students who hope to under- and either history or the problem of its interpretation the nportance of this ancient literature is greater than is usually cognised. It would not be an exaggeration to say that those eople who study merely nineteenth-century history, and see the neteenth century running by apparently natural processes into e world of the present day, are liable to fall into a routine kind thinking which actually incapacitates them for any apprecia- on of the profounder characteristics of our time. In the ncient world, where a long series of centuries allows us to see w historical episodes ultimately worked themselves out; in ore simple forms of society where events are less entangled, so at causes may be seen more clearly leading to their effects; in

antique city-states, where we can more easily view the body politic as a whole and where developments are telescoped into a shorter compass, so that the processes are more easily traceable—in all such cases as these the student of history may reach a profounder wisdom than can come from any vision of the nineteenth century through the eyes of the twentieth. Even if this were not true it might be well if all historical students were induced to occupy themselves with an internal analysis of a few mighty episodes in history—the fall of the Roman Empire, for example, or the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century—episodes which have represented the climax of human vicissitude and endeavour, high peaks in the experience of humanity on the earth. By all these lines of argument the events in the centre of which stands the famous Exile of the ancient Jews ought to be a part of the curriculum of every serious student of the past. They are more contemporary with the moral predicament of this part of the world since 1939 or 1945 than anything in the history of the nineteenth century. And they enable us to see to what an extent our religious thought itself has developed from wrestlings with God and reflection on tragic history.

GOD IN HISTORY

On the Old Testament view God is intimately involved in all the events of history, and the twists and turns of the resulting story seem as though they had been shaped by a person—whatever men may do or try to do, the total result (as the historian would synthesize it) shows the effects of His hand. In this He continues the original work of creation, with still fresh devices at His command, still fresh surprises in reserve. " I have shewed new things from this time. . . . They are created now and not from of old ; and before this day thou heardest them not ; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them." His policies wait upon the conduct of human beings, however—now He " hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh "—now He says, " If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil I thought to do unto them "—so there is always great elasticity and variety in the developments that the story may take at any given moment. While men are about their several purposes there is a history-making going on over their heads to compound the results of

heir efforts and turn them into a pattern. And, if they had done heir thinking on this basis, men would hardly have made the istake of assuming that since the nineteenth century was of a ertain character, the twentieth century would go the same way, nly more so. Furthermore, this Providence, working upon the ves of creatures who are still free, has the power—a power so ecessary for the salvaging of human history—of turning evil ito good. As Joseph said to his brethren, "As for you, ye nought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring o pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." In fact, the azardous moments for the world must be those when God erely withdraws His hand, merely hides His face from men, erely allows events to work themselves out. There were times hen it was an additional sin of the Jews to resist events that emed an ordinance of God—to fight against Providence—as hen under the shadow of the terrible empires of Assyria and abylon Isaiah had to protest against any resort to an alliance ith Egypt, and Jeremiah preached, not resistance, but "collaoration", to the horror of the jingoists. In such cases the fusal to listen to the word of God through the mouth of the ophets brought its own automatic retribution.

JDGMENT IN HISTORY

I do not know if it would be rash to suggest that, as our ppropriation of religion must differ in some respect from that the ancient Jews, this view of the intimate relations between od, morality and history will be likely to find favour only with ose who have previously been convinced of the operation of od in their personal life. In other words our interpretation the human drama is an extension of the interpretation that we ve to life in our personal experience of it. Granted so much, must be difficult for the religious mind not to feel that the setcks, the adversities and the sufferings of life are (according to rcumstances perhaps) either a judgment on one's sins, or a scipline for the soul, or a testing of character, or any combinaon of these. Once again it must be true that if God works upon ir lives in detail and in the intimate things, He must operate nerally in history—we can move on to a broader canvas and ually say that there is "judgment" in history for example. istorians have long recognized the fact—recognized that a

Napoleon and a Hitler came to a downfall which was a retribution for their sins and excesses. Even when historians seem to speak a different language we ought to be careful not to be deceived by what is their technical form of phraseology—a phraseology that is adapted to their particular purposes. They may say that the capitalistic system has been carrying us to ruin for a generation, but they know that they mean that it is human cupidity (not sufficiently checked under this so-called capitalistic system) that has been over-reaching itself. They may say that absolute monarchy was once the evil, but they mean in reality that human beings are always unfit to be allowed to hold unlimited power.

Sometimes the Old Testament writers seemed to regard the judgment as implicit in events, or embedded in the very constitution of things. Jeremiah says, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee"; "Your sins have withholden good things from you"; "Behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts"; and "Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?" Later, in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, we read: "For the creation, ministering to thee its maker, straineth its force against the unrighteous for punishment." Sometimes God has only to withhold His protection—"I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be"—and the terrible penalty comes from His non-intervention. When the loom of mighty empires gives presage of colossal disaster, the great prophets see God Himself coming with judgment, however, and ask themselves "What are the sins of Israel?" They did not—as the twentieth century would have done—merely cry out in self-righteousness against the sins and aggressions of Assyria.

MESSIANIC IDEAS

The Old Testament view of history comes to us in stages, but at each new stage in the development the old is not superseded—it forms the substratum for the new, so that layer is piled on layer, and the more ancient ideas may come to appear different in a new context. At the climax of the story it is difficult to see how anybody could understand an "historical religion"—or accept a Christian view of history—without this initial sub-

ratum, this Old Testament interpretation of secular history. ven the thunderous prophetic message of judgment in history, ough at times it almost seemed to denote a final judgment, an tter destruction, was soon realized not to have superseded the ind of history based on the Promise—it was superimposed upon at history but it did not cancel the Promise. When disaster ad come and despair was at its worst this was remembered and ere appeared that interesting historical conception, the idea of e Remnant of Israel, who, keeping faithful or chastened by eir sufferings, should return to the homeland and still inherit l the fulness of the Promise. Consonant with this, there merged the messianic hope, which issued on occasion in such ne nostalgic poetry, and which seemed to promise the ancient ws a great political future, still, amongst the nations of the earth. me writers have asserted that this political messianism was an portant contribution to our interpretation of the human drama, nce it showed history moving to a purpose, moving to an end at should lie within history and take place on the earth itself. has even been suggested that the modern idea of progress sued in reality out of this phase of Jewish historical thought. is not clear, however, that this political messianism did not ad the Jewish people to political mistakes and disasters, even it merits some of the praise it has received. We pay it a ubtful compliment in any case if we suggest that it may be the rent of the modern idea of progress. Certain periods of strain the twentieth century have issued in forms of political messian- m which could only add to our misgivings on this point. Here a branch of Jewish thought on the subject of the human ama which was to be wonderfully redeemed at a later date and as to become wonderfully relevant, when it became spiritual- ed and was brought to a different kind of fulfilment in the ristian revelation. Moreover, before the opening of the ristian era, apocalyptic thought had attained the view that only direct intervention on the part of God could rescue man-in- story.

HE PROBLEM OF UNDESERVED CATASTROPHE

A view of history which sought to show that events had a ral character and that all events can be turned to moral benefit, is bound to find its crucial challenge when it had to consider

the incidence of suffering in the world. Ezekiel was evidently puzzled to see some of the unrighteous surviving the catastrophe that God had brought upon the wicked, and he seems to have conjectured that they were allowed to live in order that their wickedness should provide standing evidence of the reason for the Divine intervention that had taken place. "Ye shall see their ways and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem . . . and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done." The converse case—the case of the innocent sufferer, a case where a doctrine of "judgment" was palpably insufficient, whether the sufferer were a nation or an individual—exercised some of the highest thought of the Old Testament. Once again the historical problem was at the same time a problem intimately personal, bound to be affected by one's ideas on the whole problem of suffering. The Old Testament had to meet the problem of cataclysmic history in its extremest form, for they lacked the doctrine of original sin, which alters the bearings of many things in history, and they lacked the doctrine of a future life and a judgment after death, with a consequent re-distribution of fortunes in another world. The picture of the Suffering Servant (e.g. in Isaiah liii) voluntarily accepting his tragedy as one who bears the sins of others—as part of his mission in the world—is the highest point reached by the ancient Jews in their attempt to comprehend (and to reconcile themselves with) their national tragedy. It provides a pattern of what takes place in history, what helps to redeem history, what reached its perfect fulfilment in the life of Christ—namely suffering accepted as voluntary and as vicarious, and regarded as the only way of reconciling history with morality or reconciling oneself with history. In other words, we interpret human history and we make our peace with it, not as students who merely observe and calculate, not as God who sees and comprehends all, but rather as participators in it who have discovered for ourselves the rôle which brings harmony.

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